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ABSTRACT

Federalism is conducive to two important elements of the political process: competition and the search for compromise. This is a reason for the prosperity and political stability of the Federal Republic of Germany. Many citizens can involve themselves in the political life of the nation, whether at the federal or state level. With its area of 249,000 square kilometers and a population of 61 million, the Federal Republic of Germany is one political entity, but with its federal states it is also more. It represents unity in diversity. In addition to profiles of the states, this document includes materials about distribution of tasks, legislation of the federation and the states, administration--mainly the responsibility of the states, administration of justice--federal and state jurisdiction, financial burdens, distribution of taxes, the Bundesrat--the federative legislative body, and external representation. (BZ)

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MANY STATES BUT ONLY ONE COUNTRY

The federative structure of the Federal Republic of Germany

by

Dr Konrad Reuter

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Contents Page

A. The Federative Structure

1. Unity in diversity 1
2. Distribution of tasks 1
3. Legislation of the Federation and the states 2
4. Administration - mainly the responsibility of the states 4
5. Administration of justice - federal and state jurisdiction 5
6. Financial burdens 5
7. Distribution of taxes 6
8. The Bundesrat - the federative legislative body 7
9. External representation 9
10. Summary 1o

B. The States

Baden-Wuerttemberg 11
Bavaria 13
Berlin (West) 15
Bremen 17
Hamburg 19
Hesse 21
Lower Saxony 23
North-Rhine/Westphalia 25
Rhineland-Palatinate 27
Saarland 29
Schleswig-Holstein 31

A.

The Federative Structure

1. Unity in diversity

(INP). - The citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany are Hessians or Bavarians or Lower Saxons, but they are all Germans. Whether a person lives in Baden-Wuerttemberg, North-Rhine/Westphalia or the Saarland, he is a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany. That is the character of this federal state. The body politic as a whole (Bund or Federation) is made up of constituent states known as Laender. Neither the Federation nor the Laender can act of their own accord. It is their interaction at federal and state level that is the essence of the state as a whole.

Germany always had a decentralized structure until its catastrophic experience with centralism in the form of the National Socialist dictatorship from 1933 to 1945. There was no excessively powerful central authority able to govern the affairs of distant provinces. The delegation of political authority to the regions is part of the legacy of German constitutional history. This separation of powers was continued with the Basic Law, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, which became effective on 23 May 1949.

The other part of Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), was also a federal state originally, according to the constitution adopted on 7 October 1949. However, the five states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia were desolved in 1952 and, not counting Berlin (East), replaced by 14 administrative districts (Rostock, New Brandenburg, Schwerin, Potsdam, Frankfurt on the Oder, Magdeburg, Halle, Leipzig, Cottbus, Dresden, Erfurt, Suhl, Gera, Karl-Marx-Stadt). Thus, as its constitution now says, the GDR is a unitary state.

2. Distribution of tasks

In a federation power and responsibility are divided between the central organs and the states. In addition to the classical "horizontal" division (legislative, executive, judicature) there is a "vertical" division as between the country as a whole and its constituent parts. Powers are therefore separated in a twofold sense, so that not only the Federation but each state has a parliament, a government, and courts of law.

(1)

The authors of the constitution did not merely apportion these powers according to subject matter but also took into account the political functions of the Federation and the states. Generally speaking, legislation is for the most part the responsibility of the Federation whilst administration falls within the sphere of competence of the states. Foreign relations, with the odd exception, are the prerogative of the Federal Government, whereas the legal system embraces both the Federation and the states. This political structure places the Federation in a strong position because with its comprehensive legislative authority it can establish standard rules for all the states and all the people. The states, however, have an important compensatory function in that they have a say in federal legislation through the Bundesrat (the Council of States which is the second legislative body). Federal bills that affect the states in a particular way can only pass into law with the explicit consent of the Bundesrat.

3. Legislation of the Federation and the states

The Basic Law has established two categories of federal legislation. Certain matters that require national laws in the interest of the community as a whole are the exclusive domain of the Federation. They include, for instance, foreign affairs, defence, nationality questions, currency, weights and measures, posts and telecommunications, customs and border protection. But there are a number of fields for which both the Federation and the states may legislate. This is known as "concurrent" legislation. The Federation has priority, however, and the states may only legislate if and to the extent that the federal parliament has not already covered the same ground. In fact, the Federation has exercised this priority to such a degree that the states have practically no room to legislate concurrently. The areas affected include criminal and procedural law, assembly and association, commercial and labour law, transport and housing.

In some cases the Federation's scope is limited. In matters of higher education, the media and films, nature conservation, landscape management, regional planning, water economy, personal registration, identity cards and passports, for instance, it may only establish general guidelines, so that the states can fill in the details themselves. The Regional Planning Act, for instance, contains only such general rules and it is up to each state to implement structural plans which suit its economic, social and cultural circumstances.

State legislation

The states can legislate where the Federation has no constitutional authority to do so. This may seem as if the states have considerable legislative scope which is only limited by the Federation's own law-making rights, but in reality the situation is in many respects different. From the Federal Republic's inception in 1949 the Federation was given responsibility for nearly all important areas of legislation, and its range of competence has been widened further still as a result of various amendments to the constitution. At the present time the states still have almost exclusive legislative competence for cultural affairs, especially schools and higher education, radio and television, communal affairs which cover the organization of towns, cities and rural districts, and general police organization.

This means that in these areas the states are quite at liberty to pursue their own objectives. This can produce competition and diversity, especially in the cultural field, but it does not rule out supraregional co-ordination. The Laender are individually responsible for police matters but they have all agreed that, for instance, police officers nationwide should wear the same uniform. There are still quite considerable differences as regards school systems but the ministers of education of the states are constantly striving to achieve uniformity where this is considered meaningful by all. In these areas, however, no state can be forced to comply with a decision of the Federal Government or a majority decision of the other states. Nor does state authority mean that geographical limitations apply in all cases. Although the states have exclusive responsibility for television, for instance, there are nevertheless national broadcasts. The state broadcasting corporations have formed a national network known as the ARD within which they broadcast programmes individually and jointly on the First Channel. There is also a Second Channel known as the ZDF which was established as a joint corporation of the states. Some private companies also screen programmes on a regional basis.

Despite the Federation's framework-setting competence, the states also have considerable legislative scope for regional planning, nature conservation, landscape management, and water economy.

The state parliaments are of course individually responsible for their regional budgets. Each state can itself decide how to dispose of its income. Its scope for action, like that of the Federation, is less than ten per cent, however, because statutory commitments must first be financed before any new priorities can be established.

4. Administration - mainly the responsibility of the states

The architects of the Basic Law wanted to avoid setting up huge central authorities that would take decisions affecting people in far away places. They therefore placed public administration for the most part in the hands of the states. Only in a few cases are federal authorities responsible for the implementation of legislation. This responsibility extends mainly to the foreign service, railways, posts and telecommunications, federal fiscal administration, the Federal Armed Forces, the Federal Border Guard, and labour placement. Nearly all other administrative authority is delegated to the states, their districts and various local authorities. Hence the states implement not only their own legislation but also that of the Federation. When giving effect to federal laws they act either "on behalf of the Federation" or "on their own behalf". They are agents of the Federation, so to speak, in such fields as motorways, highways and waterways, and in the application of laws involving payments where the Federation has to meet at least half the cost. In such instances the Federal Government can issue instructions to the state authorities and therefore intervene in matters of detail.

In practice the states apply most federal laws as if they were their own. This leaves the Federal Government with less influence than in the case of laws implemented strictly on behalf of the Federation. The Federal Government's supervisory function applies only to the legality of state administrative decisions, not to their expediency. Where a law may be implemented in several legitimate ways, the state has a choice and the Federal Government may not revoke its decision on the ground that one of the other possibilities would have been better, "more expedient". Thus the states are not merely executive organs but can give consideration to their own views and make genuine decisions. This applies in particular to laws covering building, social assistance, trade and industry, indeed to most federal laws.

State laws are always implemented by the state authorities, not by federal agencies. This is not exclusively a matter of applying individual regulations but also reflects the state's role in the development of the community as manifest in its service-providing administration. In this process it is responsible for the building of new schools, universities, theatres and museums, but also for the public financing of industrial settlement, structural policy and town planning. Thus administration in this broadest sense of government activity, as distinct from the legislative role of parliament, is not merely a subordinate, executive function. The states play an active and therefore import part in the political process.

5. Administration of justice - federal and state jurisdiction

In the third branch of public authority, the administration of justice, the jurisdiction of the Federation and the states is intermingled to a greater extent than in the case of legislation and administration. There is an inter-related system of court procedure in that trials are begun in state courts and can end with appeals being lodged with federal courts. If a federal court finds that the ruling of a state court contains an error in law it may overrule that court's decision. This ensures the uniform administration of justice throughout the land.

6. Financial burdens

Most of the principles and rules underlying the division of responsibilities as between the Federation and the states would have no real meaning if the financial aspects were not regulated. What would be the point of the states having responsibility for road construction if they didn't have the money to finance it? Thus the laws governing cost-sharing are the main supports of the federative structure and a constant subject of negotiation between the Federation and the states. The Basic Law divided these fiscal responsibilities as follows:

Administrative costs (staff, equipment, etc.) necessary to maintain the machinery of government must be borne, in the case of federal authorities by the Federal Government, in the case of state authorities by the state government.

Tied expenditure has to be borne by the one holding administrative responsibility. If that responsibility lies exclusively with the Federation then it must provide the funds, and similarly with the states. Where a state is only "acting on behalf of the Federation" the latter has the last word and must therefore foot the bill. For instance, the Federal Government has to pay for motorways which are built by the states on its behalf. It also has to meet the cost of the Federal Armed Forces, which fall exclusively within its jurisdiction. Schools, on the other hand, are the responsibility of the states (more precisely the local authorities) and therefore have to be financed by them. But the states also have to finance expenditure resulting from federal laws which they are required to apply "on their own behalf", as for instance the Federal Social Assistance Act, the Prisons Act or federal environmental laws relating to air and water pollution and noise abatement.

In the case of federal "cash" laws, in other words those which involve payments to citizens, the Federal Government may have to meet all or part of the costs incurred by the states. In the case of students' grants, for instance, the Federation has to reimburse the states for part of the cost because the Training Promotion Act is a federal law. Where the states have to meet at least one quarter of the cost the law in question must have the approval of the Bundesrat.

7. Distribution of taxes

Under the Basic Law, nearly all tax laws are enacted by the Federation. The big advantage of this uniformity is that the tax burden is practically the same throughout the country. This prevents distortion of competition and ensures that no state can offer tax incentives to the detriment of the others. The states are not necessarily at a disadvantage financially because although the Federation has exclusive legislative competence it does not have an exclusive right to revenue. In fact, the Federation and the states have "equal claims" on the national income. Their requirements have to be balanced in such a way that revenue can be fairly divided, the taxpayer is not overburdened, and uniform living standards are maintained throughout the country.

Tax revenue is divided between the Federal Government on the one hand and the states on the other on the basis of two different systems. Most kinds of tax are allocated exclusively to either the Federal Government or the states, but the most important ones, accounting for about 70 percent of total revenue, are shared on a "pool" basis. This is the nucleus of the Federal Republic's fiscal system and involves three taxes. In the case of two of them, income tax and corporation tax, the constitution prescribes quotas for the Federal Government and the states. In the case of the third, the turnover or value-added tax, no quotas have been fixed and adjustments have to be made from time to time. The 1985 federal budget, for instance, totalled DM 259 billion, that of all the states together DM 234 billion. In addition, the expenditure of the local authorities came to DM 162 billion, which is financed partly from their share of income tax and partly from local rates.

But the constitutional provisions governing public finances must not only ensure that state income is divided fairly between the Federation and the Laender but also determine how the entitlement of the states is divided among them. Basically, each state keeps the taxes levied in its own territory, on the principle that each should have the taxes resulting from its economic strength and the structure of its industry. But here there are

considerable disparities. There are "poor" and "wealthy" states. Consequently, the constitution requires the financial resources of the states to be "reasonably balanced". There is no attempt to level state revenue entirely because then the better-off states would have no motive for maintaining their advantage, and their poorer neighbours no incentive for expanding their industries. A very complicated method of calculation is used, but in the end the income of the poorer states is raised to about 95 percent of the average national per-capita tax revenue.

8. The Bundesrat - the federative legislative body

The activities of the states are not confined to their own territories. Being constituent states of the Federation they can exercise influence on the country as a whole. Their mouthpiece for this purpose, given to them by the constitution, is the Bundesrat in Bonn. Article 50 of the Basic Law gives the Bundesrat a say in federal legislation and administration.

As the name implies, the Bundesrat (Federal Council) consists of representatives of the state governments. Thus its members have a dual function, a state one and a federal one. They are state politicians and federal politicians. The number of representatives differs. Each state has at least three votes. Those with more than two million inhabitants have four, those with more than six million five.

Since the members of the Bundesrat are appointed by the state governments there are no elections for the Bundesrat and therefore no legislative terms. In constitutional terms it is a "permanent body", the composition of which changes from time to time as a result of changes in state governments following regional elections. The votes of each state must be cast en bloc (i.e. they must all be either yes, no, or abstention), thus reflecting the intentions of the state and not of the individual members of the Bundesrat. Members are therefore bound by their state government's decisions when casting their votes.

The Bundesrat's main functions are bound up with its role in the legislative process. It can submit bills to the Bundestag, the other house of parliament which is elected directly by the people. When introducing legislation the Federal Government must first submit the bill to the Bundesrat for its comments. However, the Bundesrat performs its main legislative function when it debates bills that have already passed through the Bundestag. This is because bills which specifically affect the interests of the states may not

become law without its consent. This applies to bills proposing amendments to the constitution (requiring a two-thirds majority of the Bundesrat), to bills concerning the revenue of the states (principally those relating to taxes in which the states or local authorities have a share), and to bills affecting the administrative powers of the states, such as those which prescribe the use of specific forms or fix time limits and administrative charges, or the establishment of new public authorities. Owing to such provisions, bills may require the consent of the Bundesrat which basically do not affect state interests, as in the case of international treaties or matters of national defence.

The constitutional status and significance of the Bundesrat ensue mainly from its involvement in the legislative process. The consent requirement gives it, and hence the states, considerable influence on federal legislation because about half of all federal legislation consists of "consent" laws. Thus in one out of every two laws the Bundestag cannot decide alone but must take account of the views of the Bundesrat. This is of major political significance where majority voting in the one legislative body is not reflected in the other.

The Laender, through the Bundesrat, are also involved in legislation that does not require consent. Such laws are known as "objection bills". In these cases, however, the Bundesrat can merely express its reservations which can be overruled by the Bundestag with an absolute majority. The bill can then be signed into law and promulgated despite the Bundesrat's disapproval.

The Bundesrat also has a controlling function in respect of Federal Government administration. Under the Basic Law the Federal Government is obliged to keep the Bundesrat informed on the "management of current business". This applies not only to legislation and administration but to all government activity, including the general political situation, foreign and defence policy. The members of the Bundesrat are also entitled to attend all meetings of the Bundestag and its committees and they must be given a hearing there at any time.

Both the Federal Government and the states are required to keep a check on one another's activities, but they must at the same time be co-operative. Thus in this interaction the Bundesrat is a counterbalance to the Bundestag and the Federal Government, but it at the same time acts as a link between the Federation and the states in that it is a channel through which they can focus Federal Government attention on their interests. It involves the

Laender in the federal law-making process, thus giving them some compensation for their lack of own legislative powers. It brings the political and administrative experience of the states into the legislative and administrative processes of the Federal Government to the benefit of all, and it gives the states a share of the responsibility for the political acts or omissions of the country as a whole.

9. External representation

According to article 24 of the Basic Law, the Federal Government is responsible for the country's foreign relations but conflicts of interests may nevertheless arise with the states in this respect. A constitutional conflict can arise because only one member state of the European Community is a Federation - the Federal Republic of Germany. In the words of Peter M. Schmidhuber, minister of state and commissioner of the Free State of Bavaria at the seat of the Federal Government in Bonn, "the states in the Federal Republic are not administrative provinces which have had certain rights assigned to them by the central government but states with original autonomy and authority, and in the case of Bavaria a body politic with a history going back 1500 years and an identity to match".

A difference of opinion arose between the Bundesrat and the Federal Government over the law ratifying the enlargement of the Treaty of Rome. The states in the Federal Republic saw the enlargement process as an attempt by the European Commission in Brussels to establish a kind of centralized system which in their view would undermine their autonomous status. They demand that the Basic Law be amended to give the Bundesrat a bigger say in decisions concerning the country's external relations. They want the Federal Government to take account of the vote of the Bundesrat in all negotiations on matters which were previously the responsibility of the states. Their argument is that whilst they are unequivocally committed to the development of the European Community into a European Union "this must not lead to the lowering of national, cultural or social standards". The main source of the problem, according to the Bundesrat, is the general widening of the European Community's jurisdiction in the fields of research, technology and environmental policy. The Federal Government appreciates their problem and, in the words of Lutz Stavenhagen, minister of state in the Federal Foreign Office, "wants to co-operate with the states on major issues, but this must take place within the framework established by the Basic Law. Only the Federal Government can represent the Federal Republic of Germany in its relations with other countries, not the states."

10. Summary

Federalism is conducive to two important elements of the political process: competition and the search for compromise. This, too, is a reason for the prosperity and political stability of the Federal Republic of Germany. Many citizens can involve themselves in the political life of the nation, whether at federal or at state level. With its area of 249,000 square kilometres and a population of 61 million, the Federal Republic of Germany is one political entity, but with its federal states it is also more. It represents unity in diversity.

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B.

The States

Baden-Wuerttemberg

The state of Baden-Wuerttemberg came into being in 1952 following a referendum in three south-western states that had been formed in 1945. This is the kind of regional reorganization which the Basic Law had really intended for all other states whose boundaries had been formed more or less by chance, but it has remained the only example. With an area of 35,750 square kilometres and a population of 9.2 million, it is in both size and population the third largest federal state. It is divided into four counties, 12 regional associations, 35 rural districts, nine county boroughs and 1,100 local authorities. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are the capital Stuttgart (582,400), Mannheim (303,600), Karlsruhe (270,800), Freiburg-in-the-Breisgau (173,600), Heidelberg (131,900), Heilbronn (111,500), Pforzheim (106,700) and Ulm (100,600).

The main industrial concentration is in the river Neckar area embracing Stuttgart, Esslingen and Plochingen (automobiles, mechanical engineering, electronics, chemicals). Baden-Wuerttemberg also produces furniture, textiles, musical instruments, shoes, surgical instruments and optical equipment, but not forgetting the world-famous Black Forest cuckoo clocks, which in the old days were largely made by craftsmen at home.

Typical of the area are the small and medium-sized farms, many specializing in wine growing, tobacco, fruit, asparagus, hops and vegetables. The dominant topographical feature of this central upland area are the forests, which account for two thirds of the whole state and bear such famous names as Black Forest, Odenwald, Swabian-Franconian Forest and the Alb.

(11)

With its famous universities of Heidelberg (founded in 1386), Freiburg (1457) and Tuebingen (1477), the south-west region of Germany has always been famous for its culture and history well beyond the state's boundaries. It is proud of its long-standing democratic traditions which have their roots in both its Baden and its Wuerttemberg area. Their constitutions of 1818 and 1819 respectively were the most liberal of all the German regional constitutions of that time. One of the intellectual pioneers of this liberal tradition was Wuerttemberg's most famous son Friedrich von Schiller (1759 - 1805). Baden-Wuerttemberg maintains good relations with neighbouring Switzerland in the south and France across the Rhine in the west.

The government and parliament in Stuttgart are proud of the fact that the state's productivity and financial resources are above the national average. Indeed, it has the biggest industrial growth rate in the country. Some of its products are household names the world over, such as the cars of Daimler Benz (Mercedes).

Bavaria

Bavaria's sense of national identity stems from the fact that this region has been a political and cultural entity for a thousand years. Bavaria is the only state in the Federal Republic of Germany to have retained its old borders after the collapse of the German Reich in 1945. The name "Free State of Bavaria" seems to give that much more emphasis to the region's autonomy.

With an area of 70,546 square kilometres, Bavaria is the largest state in the Federal Republic. Its population of 10.9 million can be divided into three main groups which differ according to dialect, mentality and affinity. There are the old Bavarians in the south and east, the Franconians in the north, and the Bavarian Swabians in the southwest. In the postwar years there was a considerable influx of refugees from the German eastern territories, including Sudeten Germans, the largest group among them in Bavaria. There are seven counties, 25 county boroughs and 71 rural districts with some 2,040 local authorities. Strongly federalist in outlook, Bavaria takes a very centralistic view within its own borders, with the capital, Munich (1.3 million inhabitants), being the focal point. Other major cities are Nuremberg (483,900), Augsburg (246,600), Regensburg (131,800), Wuerzburg (127,900) and Erlangen (100,900).

In terms of its constitutional structure Bavaria differs from the other federal states in that, in addition to the Landtag or state parliament, the composition of which depends on the strength of the parties for which the regional electorate have voted, there is a second legislative body known as the Senate. The Senate is made up of representatives of the state's various social, business and cultural organizations, and of the local authorities. It performs an advisory function in the law-making process.

(13)

In former times Bavaria was a predominantly agricultural region, but nowadays farming and forestry account for only about 3 per cent of its gross domestic product. Industry has advanced rapidly since the Second World War, with the result that Bavaria is now home to aerospace companies, oil refineries and large petrochemical plants. Munich the capital, whose population since the war has grown beyond the million mark and which is sometimes referred to as "Germany's secret capital", is the state's cultural and business centre. Whereas in the old days it was the famous breweries which gave the city its profile, it is now the car, electronics, textile and chemical industries on the fringe of the metropolis. Munich, host to the 1972 Olympic Games, has become a leading fashion centre, especially for sportswear. Another important economic factor is tourism. Large parts of Bavaria, especially the alpine resorts, have become the country's most popular recreational area.

Berlin (West)

In 1945, the former German capital was divided into sectors, one each for the four occupying powers. However, the gulf between the Western allies and the Soviet Union continued to widen and culminated in 1948 in the Soviet blockade of the Western sectors. The city has since remained politically divided into Berlin (East) and Berlin (West). Officially it is still under four-power administration but the German Democratic Republic (GDR) has declared Berlin (East) its capital in contravention of the city's legal status.

According to its constitution proclaimed on 1 September 1950, Berlin (West) is a state of the Federal Republic of Germany, but it does not enjoy this status fully on account of the reservations of the Western powers. It exercises all the rights and meets all the commitments embodied in its constitution, but the authorities of the Western allies may take any steps necessary to meet their international obligations, to maintain public order and security in Berlin, to ensure its economic viability, and to protect its lines of communication.

The application of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany in Berlin (West) is likewise subject to restrictions. The 22 members of the Bundestag who represent Berlin are not elected directly by the people but by the Berlin House of Representatives, which is the city's parliament. The Berlin representatives do not have full voting rights in the Bundestag. The same applies to Berlin's representatives in the Bundesrat, the council of states.

Federal laws are only valid in Berlin (West) after they have been specifically adopted by the House of Representatives, which is always the case. Federal

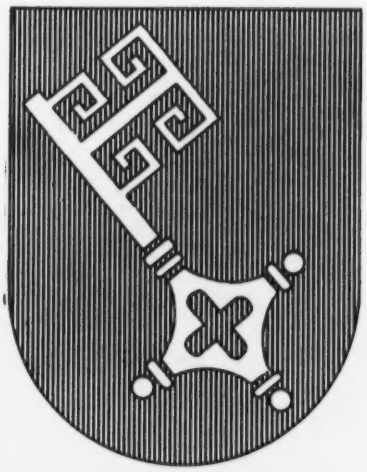
(15)

laws relating to the armed forces and the Federal Republic's membership of the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO) have no validity in Berlin since they are not compatible with the city's four-power status. (Berlin (East) does not respect the demilitarized status of Berlin as a whole).

Geographically enclosed by the GDR and Berlin (East), Berlin (West), with an area of 480 square kilometres and a population of 1.9 million, is Germany's largest city. As mentioned above, its parliament is called the House of Representatives and its government the Senate, which is headed by the Governing Mayor of Berlin. Berlin (East) has an area of 403 square kilometres and a population of 1.1 million. Up to 1945 Berlin was indisputably the main focal point for the arts, science and education in Germany. It was also Europe's principal industrial city (engineering, electronics, food and tobacco). Moreover, many wholesalers, film companies and financial institutions are located in the city.

After the Second World War many parts of the city lay in ruins. But soon the Western sectors, thanks to Western support, were quickly rebuilt. In relation to the GDR and Berlin (East), they became the "showcase" of the West, not only economically but, owing to the democratic system of government, also politically. Berlin (West) developed into an "island of freedom". Hundreds of thousands of GDR citizens fled to the West via Berlin. The GDR's reaction to this exodus was to build a wall (on 13 August 1961) 45 km long cutting right through the centre of the city, complete with barbed-wire installations and death strips. The situation improved in 1971 following the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin (between the United States, the Soviet Union, France and the United Kingdom). In 1987 the divided city celebrates its 750th anniversary.

Bremen



With an area of 400 square kilometres and a population of 700,000, Bremen is the smallest federal state, but it is a gateway for the Federal Republic's trade with other countries. The key in its coat of arms, formerly representing the key of St. Peter, the sign used by the archbishops who ruled the region, is now given a modern interpretation: Bremen sees itself as a "key to the world".

The Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen, which is the city's official name denoting its long seafaring tradition, consists of Bremen (560,000 inhabitants) at the end of the Weser estuary and Bremerhaven (140,000) 60 km downstream. The territory between them belongs to Lower Saxony. Bremen has a long and colourful history. It was made a bishopric in 787 and in 965 was given market rights by the emperor. In the year 1260 the city joined the Hanseatic League, an organization of merchants which eventually embraced more than 90 trading cities, including ports on the North Sea and the Baltic, and others inland. In 1646 Bremen was declared a free imperial city, which meant that it had no regional ruler but was under the direct authority of the emperor. The city's former glory is reflected in the Gothic cathedral of St. Peter, completed in 1043, and the beautiful town hall next to it, also Gothic (1405), although in 1612 one side was renovated in the decorative but outgoing Weser Renaissance style.

The port of Bremen is Germany's second largest after Hamburg. It is not only a fast transshipment centre but also the hub of local trade and industry. Much of the country's imported tobacco goes straight to Bremen's cigar and cigarette factories. The same applies to coffee beans, which are roasted and marketed locally. The cornmills, woolcarding and jute-spinning factories, the timberyards, wine importers, warehouses, and of

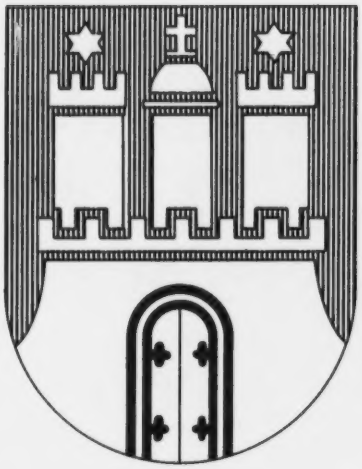
(17)

course the docks and counting houses are further indications of the city's importance as a seaport. Car manufacturing, engineering and electronics are also featured prominently in Bremen and, more recently, the aerospace industry, which produces aircraft, space vehicles and research satellites.

This city-state's government, as in the case of Berlin (West) and Hamburg, is traditionally known as the Senate. The president of the Senate (i.e. head of government) is simultaneously the city's mayor.

(18)

Hamburg



"The Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, being an international seaport, has a special duty to perform on behalf of the German people by virtue of its history and the law of the land. It sees itself acting in a spirit of peace as an intermediary between all continents and nations of the world." This exacting standard form the introduction to Hamburg's constitution adopted in 1952. Hamburg sees itself as one of Germany's gateways to the world, which is the modern interpretation of its coat of arms. It is Germany's biggest seaport and principal trading centre.

Hamburg is simultaneously a city and a federal state, a city-state. It covers an area of 754 square kilometres, including a water surface of 62 square kilometres, and its population numbers 1.6 million. The city parliament still bears the name of the original assembly of citizens entitled to vote, the Buergerschaft. The Senate is the state government and at the same time the city council. The president of the Senate is also the city's first mayor but he cannot lay down policy guidelines for the senators (equivalent to cabinet ministers). He is primus inter pares, that is, first in a group whose members have equal rank. Another Hamburg peculiarity is that its senators, judges and civil servants are not allowed to accept decorations.

Hamburg's history dates back to the 9th century when a castle was built on the Elbe to defend the city's boundaries. But Hamburg owes its growth and fame to the shipping industry and international trade. It was one of the original members of the Hanseatic League in the 13th century, and in the 16th century, following many setbacks, became the most powerful member of this organization of trading cities in the region encompassing the North Sea and the Baltic. Hamburg managed to keep itself out of reach of the emperor and the King of Denmark. Though situated over 100 kilometres from the

(19)

North Sea, it developed into Germany's principal seaport. It has Europe's largest single container handling facility which is considered one of the fastest in the world.

Near the docks are a mass of factories and warehouses, etc. handling products ranging from grain, rubber, chemicals, margarine, oil, canned foods, cocoa and cigarettes. This Hanseatic city is also important for banking, insurance and services. Hamburg is the hub of the Federal Republic's media and film industry, and with more than 20 theatres, various museums, art galleries and exhibitions, it can rightly claim to be an international cultural centre.

Hesse

Hesse can be appropriately called a "state of the centre", and not only geographically for its economic and social structure reflect by and large the average conditions to be found in the Federal Republic of Germany.

It covers an area of 21,112 square kilometres and its population numbers 5.5 million. It has two counties, six county boroughs, 21 rural districts and some 430 local authorities. Cities with over 100,000 inhabitants are Frankfurt on the Main (629,200), Wiesbaden, the state capital (273,700), Kassel (195,500), Darmstadt (138,300) and Offenbach on the Main (111,200).

Hesse has a varied landscape ranging from river valleys and depressions to low-topped mountainous regions. The wine-growing area along the Bergstrasse and the fertile basin of the river Main are some of the warmest parts of Germany, whilst some of the higher regions are bleak and wet.

Agriculture and forestry together account for about six per cent of the region's workforce. The main crops are sugar-beet, vegetables, fruit, wine, tobacco and, in the hilly regions, rye, barley, oats and potatoes. Almost two fifths of the state is wooded, a larger proportion than in any other federal state.

Manufacturing plays a more important role, however. Its focal point is the Rhine-Main area around Frankfurt, the second largest West German industrial agglomeration after the Ruhr in North-Rhine/Westphalia. The principal branches of industry are chemicals (Darmstadt, Frankfurt-Hoechst), cars (Ruesselsheim, Kassel), leather (Offenbach), optical instruments (Wetzlar), electronics and engineering. On the whole Hesse is, economically, one of the better-off states.

(21)

Frankfurt on the Main, birthplace of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, though not the capital, is the state's metropolis. It ranks as Germany's undisputed banking and financial centre and has the main stock exchange. It is the venue for major industrial fairs and Frankfurt airport is a focal point of international air traffic. The city is also a busy rail and road transport junction on the country's north-south and east-west axes. Frankfurt's cityscape is one of high-rise buildings. Only the most important historical buildings that survived the Second World War have been rebuilt.

Hesse's present boundaries were drawn after the Second World War, but in contrast to other reorganized states it is not an artificial product. Indeed, for the first time in history areas with a common ethnic, historical, cultural and social identity which in former times were under separate rule have been drawn together into one political entity.

(22)

Lower Saxony

In their state anthem the people of this region say they can "withstand the furious storm" and are "rooted in the native soil". The name Lower Saxony was first mentioned in official documents in 1354, but the present state of the same name did not emerge until 1946, when formerly autonomous areas were merged with the Prussian province of Hanover. Under its former status as a duchy, Hanover was from 1714 to 1837 linked to England by virtue of the fact that the English kings of that period came from the house of Hanover. This kind of union was not uncommon in the Europe of those days.

With a population of 7.5 million in an area of 47,000 square kilometres, Lower Saxony is the most thinly populated state in the Federal Republic of Germany. It consists of four counties, nine county boroughs, 38 rural districts and about 1,000 local authorities. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are the capital Hanover (535,100), Brunswick (261,500), Osnabrueck (157,800), Oldenburg (136,400), Goettingen (128,500), Wolfsburg (126,800), Salzgitter (113,500) and Hildesheim (102,700).

The arts and science have a long tradition in Lower Saxony. A world-famous landmark is the Georg August University of Goettingen. The Wolfenbuettel Library, which was at one time under the charge of Lessing the poet, has developed into a European centre of classical research.

Lower Saxony has a varied landscape. Part of it is on the North Sea coast, another part is in the North German Plain, and yet another in the central uplands. The Harz mountain range, with its romantic valleys and bizarre cliffs, its extensive forests and lakes, is a major tourist region, as is the totally different insular and coastal landscape along the North Sea. Also

popular with holiday-makers all year round is the Lueneburg Heath with its sandy soil and barren landscape of heather, juniper, birch and pine trees.

At first sight Lower Saxony creates the impression of being an agricultural region. And it is true that it is a major cattle-breeding centre and producer of potato seed and cereals. The leaping horse in the state's coat of arms still symbolizes another important sector of the economy, horse-breeding. This is the home of the famous Hanover breed which are among the world's best show jumpers.

But Lower Saxony has grown more and more into an industrial region. Though the Federal Republic of Germany has very few natural oil and gas deposits, 60 per cent of the amounts produce come from Lower Saxony. This state's economy also benefits from the rock salt and potassium salt in the foothills of the Harz mountains, and from Germany's largest iron ore deposits near Salzgitter and Brunswick. Other important industries in the region are automobiles (the Volkswagen cars are manufactured in Wolfsburg), as well as oil-refining and chemicals in the coastal area around Wilhelmshaven. And to complete the picture, of course, there is the internationally famous Hanover Fair.

North-Rhine/Westphalia

When they hear the name North-Rhine/Westphalia most Germans immediately think of the Ruhr district. Whilst it is true that much does revolve around this mining and engineering area, the largest industrial agglomeration on the continent, North-Rhine/Westphalia is more. It is a region of such variety that it does not fit into any standard pattern.

It did not acquire its present political status until 1946, when the United Kingdom, whose forces occupied the area at the time, integrated the former Prussian provinces of Rhineland (northern part) and Westphalia. In 1947 they added the until then autonomous small state of Lippe. North-Rhine/Westphalia has 17 million people, far more than any other state, and since it covers an area of only 34,044 square kilometres it is also the most densely populated region. The average number of inhabitants per square kilometre is 499, but in the crowded Ruhr district it is more than 2,000. Its administrative divisions are five counties, 23 county boroughs, 31 rural districts and some 390 local authorities. The small number of municipalities is a result of drastic administrative reforms carried out in 1967. They were reorganized into units which numbered less than one fifth of the original 2,000.

Of the 67 cities in the Federal Republic of Germany with more than 100,000 inhabitants, 30 are situated in North-Rhine/Westphalia. The ten largest of these are Cologne (976,800), Essen (650,200), Dortmund (609,400), Duesseldorf, the capital, (592,200), Duisburg (558,700), Bochum (402,000), Bielefeld (312,600), Gelsenkirchen (305,600), Bonn, the federal capital, (287,100) and Muenster (267,600).

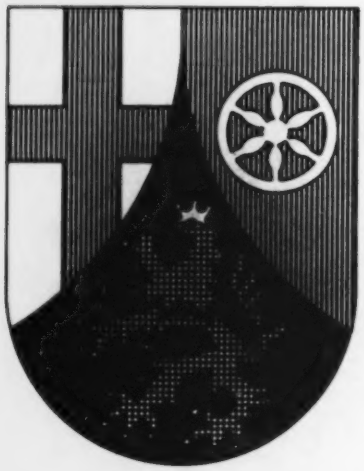
It was the rich coal deposits that led to the dynamic growth of the area between Rhine, Ruhr and Lippe. They supplied the energy with which local

iron ore was smelted. Coal and steel - that was the right combination for industrial growth which produced a high concentration of factories. The pits, furnaces and factories attracted people from all over Germany, even from Poland. The Ruhr became a melting pot - for metal and, in the figurative sense, for people.

As the Ruhr district was heavily dependent upon coal and steel, its industries were vulnerable in times of crisis. The oil boom ushered in the decline of coal. The process of structural change in the coalmining industry, which was stepped up with government subsidies in the 60s, continues to this day. In the meantime, new branches of industry have emerged. Moreover, the area's appearance is changing as a result of measures to protect the environment. Now there is less smoke and soot.

But North-Rhine/Westphalia does not derive its economic strength entirely from the Ruhr. In the area around Cologne lignite is mined, and textiles, cars, chemicals, engineering, electronics, cosmetics and confectionary are traditionally located in the western, southern and eastern parts of the state. The state capital of Duesseldorf is not only the hub of government and parliament but also a business centre. It is known as "the desk of the Ruhr" and also hosts the world of haute couture and various industrial fairs. Popular recreational areas in North-Rhine/Westphalia are the Eifel mountains, the Siebengebirge, the Bergisches Land, the Sauerland and the Teutoburg Forest. Among the most attractive cities are Cologne, Aachen and Muenster with their historic buildings and monuments and artistic traditions. Bonn, the federal capital, is where Beethoven was born.

Rhineland-Palatinate



Rhineland-Palatinate was called a "test-tube" state because it was literally patched together in 1946, on the orders of the French who occupied the region at the time. It was formed out of former Prussian, Bavarian, Oldenburg and Hessian territories. There was hardly any industry and the land was barren and fragmented, so that the predominantly farming community could just about produce enough for their own needs.

The population numbers 3.6 million in an area of 19,830 square kilometres. The state of Rhineland-Palatinate comprises three counties, 12 county boroughs, 24 rural districts and about 2,300 local authorities. Cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are Mainz, the state capital (186,700), Ludwigshafen on the Rhine (160,300) and Koblenz (113,900).

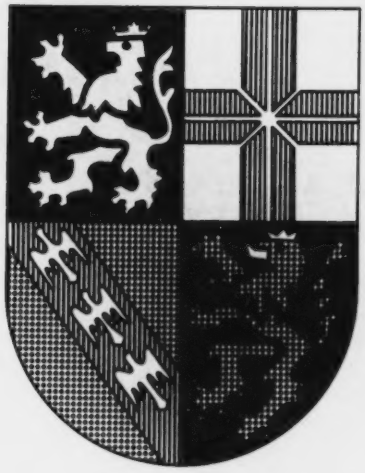
Up to 1945, the region had been a backwater of the German economy and when the new state was formed local industry suffered as a result of wartime destruction and the fact that old trade and communication links had been severed. But regional growth was given a boost when the European Economic Community was founded in 1957. As a result of this development Rhineland-Palatinate found itself at the heart of the Community and on the main traffic arteries.

The proportion of the population engaged in farming and forestry decreased rapidly as a result of the fact that many new jobs had been created in industry, the retail trade and transport, as well as the service sector. The region's main industry is chemicals (around Ludwigshafen and Mainz). Engineering, too, has made rapid progress and there is the shoe manufacturers in the Pirmasens area as well as the local brick-making and cement industry. Other important branches are timber and printing, textiles and

clothing. There are also numerous foundries and, of course, the famous precious stones and jewelry industry around Idar-Oberstein. The region also has numerous food manufacturers, breweries, distilleries and mineral-water springs. In spite of the region's rapid economic growth, most industrial companies fall into the medium-size category in keeping with the local tradition. Small trades and crafts have also managed to hold their own. Two thirds of the total wine-growing area of the Federal Republic of Germany is in Rhineland-Palatinate. Most of the vineyards are to be found along the Rhine and the Moselle, the Ahr and the Nahe.

The state of Rhineland-Palatinate embraces part of the oldest cultural landscape in central Europe. Trier, the birthplace of Karl Marx, claims to be the oldest city in Germany. The Romans found a Celtic settlement there when, 2,000 years ago, they established one of their main staging posts on their approaches to the Rhine. The state has made great efforts to preserve these outstanding monuments to the nation's cultural evolution.

Saarland



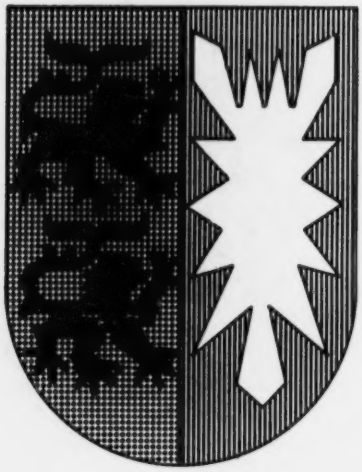
The Saarland suffered more than any other German territory as a result of the former enmity between Germany and France. It was always a bone of contention between the two countries. After the Second World War it was separated from Germany and formed a customs and currency union with France. In 1955, however, a referendum was carried out in agreement with France, as a result of which the Saarland was reincorporated on 1 January 1957 as a state of the Federal Republic of Germany. The customs and currency union with France continued until 5 July 1959. The Saarland has an area of 2,569 square kilometres and a population of 1.06 million. Its administrative subdivisions are the city of Saarbruecken and five urban districts consisting of 50 local authorities. The region's only major city is the capital Saarbruecken with 193,700 inhabitants.

This state derives its wealth from its coal deposits, which have indeed determined its political development. Coal has always been used to smelt imported iron ore and is the basis of the iron and steel industry. Other branches moved to the area, e.g. steel construction and machinery, cable and pipes, glass, textiles, shoes, cement, ceramics, paper and timber, thus making the Saarland the highly industrialized region it is today. Coal and steel have been downgraded over the years in favour of these other branches of industry in order to have a more evenly balanced and less crisis-prone economy.

In spite of industrialization the Saarland still has a great deal to offer in the way of nature and recreation, and other leisure-time pursuits have been facilitated by dams which have formed artificial lakes. Approximately one third of the state's total area is wooded, the main tree species being beech. Many people in the mining and industrial community still work their own fields or run small farms.

History has a considerable influence on the region, which explains why the Saarland maintains good relations with its neighbours, France and Luxembourg. Saarbruecken, the capital, apart from its importance as a university town and as a popular centre for congresses and industrial fairs, also has a Franco-German grammar school which serves as a model for the fostering of relations between the two countries. French is the first foreign language taught at secondary schools in the region, and the Saarland broadcasting network has regular listeners across the borders, in the same way that French and Luxembourg programmes also cater for their neighbours in the Saarland.

Schleswig-Holstein



Schleswig-Holstein, the state situated between the North Sea and the Baltic, is often called the "bridge to the North". Indeed, nearly all the traffic between the Federal Republic and Scandinavia uses the roads, rails and ports of Schleswig-Holstein. The region also has many sea routes to Eastern Europe.

This state has a population of 2.6 million in an area of 16,000 square kilometres. Its coastline is 526 kilometres long (including the islands 920 kilometres). The stretch of border shared with Denmark is only 67 kilometres long.

Schleswig-Holstein has four county boroughs, eleven rural districts and about 1,100 local authorities. Cities with over 100,000 inhabitants are the state capital Kiel (250,400) and Luebeck (221,500), the birthplace of Thomas Mann (1875 - 1955), who described this former "Queen of the Hanseatic League" in his novels.

Schleswig-Holstein is a very flat area; its highest "mountain" is 164 metres high. But the region has three distinct zones. In the west is the Marsch, which consists of a fertile, almost treeless arable and pasture area and coastal flats. There are hardly any ports in this area. Off the coast is the chain of North Frisian islands. East of the Marsch is the Geest, a moorland area, and yet further east an undulating, fertile landscape with many lakes. The Baltic coast in this area has many indentations, such as the Luebeck Bight and the Kiel and Flensburg Foerde.

The sea plays a prominent part in the life of the community. Defending the west coast against the storm-tides of the North Sea is an extremely costly undertaking. On the Baltic Sea are many important trade, ferry and naval

ports, as well as the locations of well-known shipbuilding industries. The Kiel Canal connecting the North Sea with the Baltic is the most heavily travelled stretch of navigable water in the world. The northbound roads and railways cross the canal over 50-metre high bridges and through a tunnel.

Yachting is the most popular pastime in this area. Kiel has twice played host to the yachting events of the Olympic Games, in 1936 and 1972. Kiel Week is a world-famous annual regatta which is also accompanied by an outstanding cultural programme.

Although Schleswig-Holstein long had a primarily agricultural basis, farming today accounts for only 7 per cent of its domestic product. Today, one third of its income is generated by industry and trade. Government incentives have attracted electronic and precision-machine companies to the region, which now complement the traditional shipbuilding industry. With 28 million overnights in hotels, private homes and at camping sites, tourism is an important economic factor in this region between the oceans which has retained most of its natural character. German holiday-makers tend to have a preference for the lovely islands off Schleswig-Holstein's coast.